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In order for a restriction requirement to be appropriate, there must be a serious burden on the Examiner to search all of the inventions and the inventions must be independent or distinct as claimed. The Examiner has not provided evidence that a search of all the PKSRP proteins and nucleic acids would be seriously burdensome. The fact that all of these PKSRP coding nucleic acids are listed as a Markush group in Claims 14 and 15 shows that a search and examination of all thirteen PKSRP coding nucleic acids would not present a serious burden. When the allegedly distinct inventions are presented in a Markush group, Section 803.02 of the MPEP states that "if the members of the Markush group are sufficiently few in number or so closely related that a search and examination of the entire claim can be made without serious burden, the Examiner must examine all the members of the Markush group in the claims on the merits, even though they are directed to independent and distinct inventions." Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the requirement for election of a single PKSRP protein and nucleic acid pair.

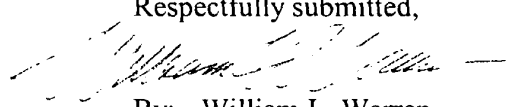
Furthermore, it is likely that the search of all thirteen PKSRPs would not be unduly burdensome according to the November 19, 1996 statement by the Commissioner that a reasonable number of sequences may be claimed in a single application (See Examination of Patent Applications Containing Nucleotide Sequences, 1192 O.G. 68 (November 19, 1996)). According to the MPEP Section 803.04, ten sequences are considered a reasonable number for examination. In this case, there are thirteen nucleic acid sequences in Groups A-M, but all of the sequences relate to protein kinase stress related proteins, and therefore, would not be unduly burdensome to search in one application.

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In the alternative, Applicants would elect with traverse Claims 1-10 and 14-20 (Claim Group I), and would further elect with traverse the MPK-3 protein and nucleic acid pair (Invention I-SEQ ID NOS:35 and 22). The election is respectfully traversed on the basis that that examination of claims relating to MPK-2, MPK-3, MPK-4, and MPK-5 (SEQ ID NOS:34 and 21, 35 and 22, 36 and 23, and 37 and 24, respectively) would not be an undue burden because of their close technological relationship. For the foregoing reasons, Applicants elect with traverse Claims 1-10 and 14-20 (Claim Group I) and further elect with traverse the MPK-3 protein and nucleic acid pair (Invention I-SEQ ID NOS:35 and 22).

The foregoing is submitted as a full and complete response to the Office Communication mailed April 30, 2002. If there are any issues which can be resolved by telephone conference or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (404) 853-8081.

Respectfully submitted,



By: William L. Warren
Reg. No. 36,714

SUTHERLAND ASBILL & BRENNAN LLP
999 Peachtree Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30309
(404) 853-8000 / (404) 853-8081 (direct)
SAB Docket 16313.0032